

Extension to Families At Work...At Home

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For your
health



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Turkey Basics: Thawing and Roasting

Follow recommended thawing and cooking techniques to keep your turkey meal safe from food borne illness!

Thawing: Thawing turkey at a temperature above 40° F allows harmful bacteria to grow. NEVER thaw turkey on a kitchen counter or back porch! There are 3 safe ways to thaw turkey:

- **In the refrigerator** - If thawing a turkey in the refrigerator, plan ahead. For every 5 pounds of turkey, allow approximately 24 hours thawing time
- **In cold water** - You can also place a turkey, in its original wrapper (or a leak-proof wrapper) in the sink and cover it completely with cold water to thaw. This method requires about 30 minutes per pound. The National Turkey Federation recommends changing the water every 30 minutes until the turkey is thawed. Turkeys thawed by the cold water method should be cooked immediately.
- **In the microwave** - Follow the manufacturer's instructions when thawing a turkey in the microwave. Plan to cook it immediately after thawing because some area of the turkey may become warm and begin to cook during thawing.

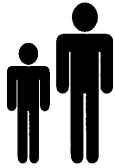
Roasting: Set the oven temperature no lower than 325° F. Whole poultry and parts should be cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 165° F, as measured with a food thermometer. Check the temperature in the innermost part of the thigh and wing and the thickest part of the breast. For optimum safety, it is recommended to cook stuffing outside the bird; check to be sure the stuffing has also

reached a minimum 165° F. If the turkey has a pop-up temperature indicator, it is recommended to still test the temperature in several places with a food thermometer.

Potentially UNSAFE Turkey-Cooking Methods:

- **Brown Paper Bag method:** This involves putting the turkey in a large brown paper grocery bag and cooking the bird at a very low temperature. These bags were never intended for use in cooking. The glue, ink, chemicals, and other materials used in recycling the bags are unsanitary and some bags may even contain tiny metal shavings. Roasting a turkey at temperatures below 325° F is unsafe. To make this safe: Use a turkey-size, oven-cooking bag instead & be sure the oven temperature is at least 325°. Use a food thermometer to check for a minimum internal temperature reading of 165°.
- **Trash Bag Method:** This involves a whole turkey placed in a large trash bag which is marinated in salt brine, herbs, and spices for several hours at room temperature. The trash bag could allow chemicals and non-food colors to leach into the food. To make this safe: Turkey should be refrigerated for any marinating processes. Also, avoid the use of any non food-grade materials, like a trash bag.
- **Slow-Cooking Overnight Method:** This involves cooking a turkey at 190-200° overnight for 12-13 hours. To make this safe: Only roast a turkey at temperature ABOVE 325° to ensure bacteria & toxins are destroyed with higher temperatures.

If you have further questions, contact me, call our ISU "Answer Line" at (800) 262-3804 (Mon.-Fri. 9:00-Noon & 1:00-4:00), or e-mail questions to: www.extension.iastate.edu/answerline.



All in the family



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Reward or Not?

A reward to a child is a great motivator. We often see rewards used by parents when their child is throwing a public tantrum, "If you stop shouting, I'll buy you a candy bar." When used like this, the reward is really a bribe. Bribes are used to stop unwanted behavior. Rewards are to be used for good behavior.

Rewards work best if the child knows in advance the expected behavior. "I expect to hear inside voices and for everyone to stay next to the grocery cart. Each child who does this will get a pack of sugarless gum at the checkout." To have rewards work, the parent must remain calm AND follow through with the plan. If the child doesn't stay close to the cart or screams, they WILL NOT get gum. In fact, they may even stop shopping and take the child home.

Many parents use money or purchased items as rewards, but the most sought after reward by children is more "focused time" with their parents. They would rather play a game, eat popcorn while watching a movie, or take a walk with their parent than receive a material reward.

To make more permanent behavior changes, parents can say, "Every day you put all your toys in the toy box before bedtime, you'll get a point. When you've gotten 5 points in one week, we'll go get an ice cream cone." This version of a reward is called a point chart. Again, it is telling the child what you DO want to see, instead of what you DON'T want to happen. Children are more motivated when they know what is expected of them.

Time For a Change

2009 already has been a year of major change in many lives. Jobs have been lost, loved ones have been lost and families' financial situations have changed.

Sometimes the things we have always depended upon to be true, no longer are — and that's hard to accept. When major changes occur in our lives it's common to experience strong emotions and inner turmoil. Change often involves events we can't control. But we can control how we deal with our emotions, thoughts, attitude and other effects of major changes.

There are three phases of a transition, a process people go through to cope with major change. The first phase is 'endings,' which includes letting go of what was. Letting go isn't easy and often involves the grief process. Every change begins with an ending, the loss of something that was. Being able to acknowledge that things are no longer the same as what they were before the change is essential to coping with that sense of loss.

The second phase is called 'the wilderness period.' This is the time between the old and new. We need to spend time thinking through what has ended and come to terms with it and accept it.

The third phase, 'new beginning,' is a time when people start to move forward. We reach the new beginning only after we have dealt with what has ended and spent the necessary time in the wilderness. Understanding the transition process can help us realize we may not feel good even when we have made the best possible decision.

People get stuck at one of the transition phases if the "letting go" has not yet occurred. It might be time to discuss your feelings with an understanding person. Professional counseling can help people cope with feelings of loss.



Holiday Tips to Stay Out of Debt

Every year thousands of Americans go into debt over the holidays because they didn't plan ahead. Here are a few tips to help you stay out of debt.

- Begin holiday planning and shopping on the Internet, as this involves no gas and it is easier to bargain shop this way. Planning ahead can also keep you from making expensive impulse buys at the last minute, which often increase your overall spending.
- Giving a charitable contribution in someone else's name is a way to take care of two obligations at once, because it gives a gift to a loved one, while still giving to the charity.
- If you travel or go on vacation during the holidays, don't forget to include these expenses into your holiday budget.
- Shop on major sale days to save money, even if it means having to fight crowds.
- Drawing names among family members or coworkers can often help to cut down on the number of people for whom you must buy gifts.

Insulation Tips & Tax Credits

This fall is a great time to take a look at your insulation because there is added incentive to improve our insulation if it is needed. Tax credits for improving residential energy efficiency have returned!

Insulating

Unless your home was specially constructed for energy efficiency, you can usually reduce your energy bills by adding more insulation. Many older homes have less insulation than homes built today, but adding insulation to a newer home may also pay for itself within a few years.

To determine whether you should add insulation, you first need to find out how much insulation you already have in your home and where. A qualified home energy auditor will include an insulation check as a routine part of a whole house energy audit. An energy audit will also help identify areas of your home that are in need of air sealing.

Before you insulate, you should make sure that your home is properly air sealed. Inspect around the following areas for any cracks and gaps that could cause air leaks: around door and window frames, mail chutes, electrical and gas service entrances, cable TV and phone lines, outdoor water faucets, where dryer vents pass through walls, bricks, siding, stucco, and foundation, air conditioners, vents and fans.

For more information on insulation and air sealing or for additional ways to save energy go to www.energysavers.gov/your_home/ or www.extension.org.

Tax Credits

The nonbusiness energy property credit, which expired after 2007, has been reinstated. You may be able to claim a nonbusiness energy property credit of 30% of the cost of certain energy efficient property or improvements you placed in service in 2009. This property can include high-efficiency heat pumps, air conditioners, and water heaters. It also may include energy efficient windows, doors, insulation materials, and certain roofs. The credit has been expanded to include certain asphalt roofs and stoves that burn biomass fuel. For more information on energy credits, visit www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=211307,00.html.



Your money's worth



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